

# ECUMENICAL PRESS SERVICE

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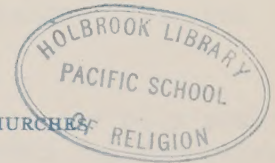
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the WORLD ALLIANCE of YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS  
the WORLD'S YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION  
the WORLD'S STUDENT CHRISTIAN FEDERATION  
the WORLD COUNCIL OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



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No. 27

Fifteenth Year

July 9, 1948

## Amsterdam Special

### The Place of Women in the Church - One of the Concerns of the Churches

When the Amsterdam Assembly of the World Council of Churches deals with "The Place of Women in the Church", it will be able to draw on the experiences and views of church women in 58 countries, following the circulation of thousands of questionnaires and after conferences on this subject were held in several countries.

Some of these experiences and views will be briefly reported in a preliminary interim report of what is believed to be the first systematic study ever made on the subject of "The Life and Work of Women in the Church" throughout the world.

The study was begun two and one-half years ago at the request of the World Council's Study Department, and the interim report of the findings has just been completed. It will be presented to the pre-Amsterdam women's study conference at Zendingscentrum, Holland, August 13 to 17, and is expected to be used as background by the Amsterdam Assembly committee which studies as one of the "concerns" of the Churches, "The Place of Women in the Church".

The response from all parts of the world to the inquiry has been beyond anyone's expectation, according to Mrs. Samuel McCrea Cavert of the United States, who has served as the volunteer director of the investigation. Miss Olive Wyon of England, a secretary of the World Council's Study Department, has helped analyse the memoranda.

The reports reveal an almost unanimous judgment that women's organisations of the Churches should be integrated into the total organisation of the Church and that there should be a greater understanding and participation on the part of women in the ecclesiastical structure and problems of the Churches.

What women are at present doing in the Church professionally is summarised in the reports. Their contribution is noted perhaps most dramatically in the foreign missionary enterprise. In the last count made of non-Roman missionaries





in 1938, there were 9,000 lay women missionaries and 7,500 missionary wives out of a grand total of 27,500.

There are in the reports many expressions of hope that there may be a continuing contact among the women of the Churches in the world within the framework of the ecumenical movement for the sake of their mutual encouragement and reinforcement.

E.P.S. Geneva

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#### GREAT BRITAIN

#### Opening of the Lambeth Conference

The Lambeth Conference opened on July 1st with a service at Canterbury Cathedral. Over 300 bishops of the Anglican Communion attended, together with representatives of the foreign clergy of London, of the Orthodox, Old Catholic, Scandinavian Churches, the Church of Scotland and the Free Churches of England. Dr W.A. Visser 't Hooft and Dr Samuel McCrea Cavert represented the World Council of Churches.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Fisher, delivered an address, stressing the gratefulness of the older Churches in the west by the constancy and steadfastness of the younger Churches under every trial. Their community, he continued, was no longer English or British or Anglo-Saxon; it included Churches of many other nations, races, and tongues in every continent. But though the word "Anglican" was no longer altogether appropriate for that diverse family of autonomous Churches, it bore witness to a truth of the past and to a truth of the present. As a fact of history every one of the Churches there represented traced its ancestry back to Canterbury and to St Augustine. The Anglican tradition first acquired its distinctive form after the days of the Reformation and its three distinguishing marks remain the same: it is catholic, scriptural, free.

But the Anglican Church seeks the visible unity of the Church of Christ which has been lost. "That subject has engaged the attention of every Lambeth Conference since their beginning and will once more engage ours". The first Assembly of the World Council of Churches to be held in Amsterdam is evidence of this companionship. "Our chief desire will be to show that the Christian Gospel is the belief which this age needs, since without it man cannot find himself, nor societies order nor nations peace."

E.P.S. Geneva

#### Archbishop Germanos in Moscow

Dr Germanos, Archbishop of Thyateira and Exarch of the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, one of the five Presidents of the World Council of Churches, has gone to Moscow in order to assist to the ceremonies for the 500th anniversary of the independence of the Russian Orthodox Church.

E.P.S. Geneva

#### UNITED STATES

#### Meeting of American Association of Theological Schools

At the occasion of the meeting of the American Association of Theological Schools held on June 16 at Dayton, Ohio, Dr Conrad Bergendoff, President of Augustana Lutheran Seminary, Rock Islands, Ill., urged upon seminarians a new attitude towards Christians of other denominations and "a new technique in the







interpretation of our own relationship to the other communions". He urged theologians to acquaint their students with the doctrines of other Churches than their own as a part of the religious life of the country concerned and "not only as a foil for the defence of one's own doctrines."

Calling upon the Christians of America to help achieve a united Christendom by learning to know one another, he declared:

"Often we know practically nothing of each other. Often we know things that are not so. More often we know not each other, but each other's great great grandparents. Lutherans know Presbyterians by what they know of Calvin, and Methodists by what they have read of Wesley. Baptists judge Lutherans by what their grandparents did to them and Congregationalists cannot forget what English history says about bishops. In some seminaries church history stops at the Reformation; in others it starts with the Massachusetts Bay Colony."

Dr Bergendoff said that the disappearance of systematic theology from the curricula of seminaries contributed to the misunderstanding between religious groups, because along with it went "a common theological language... We have a hard time understanding each other not least because we have no rich common theological language."

Declaring that the World Council of Churches is an important step in the direction of a united Christendom, Dr Bergendoff said: "Supreme sovereignty of Churches is as immoral as supreme sovereignty of nations. The World Council offers the best hope of modern history for the integration of the communions of Christendom into a pattern where faith indeed is a great standard, where hope has its sovereign place, but where love is the greatest of all."

About 100 schools are now members of the Association, 70 of them fully accredited. These 70 schools showed an enrollment of 5,690 during the 1945/46 school year. The following year enrollments had leaped to 9,565. While totals are not available for the next year, the increase is reported to be even larger.

E.P.S. Geneva

#### UNITED STATES

#### Congregationalists Move Toward Merger with the Evangelical and Reformed Church

At a meeting held in Oberlin, Ohio, on June 22, 1948, the General Council of Congregational Christian Churches approved a basis of union with the Evangelical and Reformed Church. Through this action, opposed by only a scattering of negative votes, the more than 2,000 delegates paved the way for the two denominations to form a United Church of Christ with two million members.

As a concession to the minority, who had previously held out against the merger, an interpretive clause was added which held the union should be carried out "in harmony with the spirit and purposes" of Congregational traditions. It was further agreed that the Executive Committee should, before January 1st 1949, attempt to obtain a 75 per cent vote of the membership and Churches for the merger. After January 1st, the Executive Committee was empowered to take steps to send 300 delegates to the first general synod of the combined Church when the synod is called into session.







As to the Evangelical and Reformed Church, 33 out of 34 synods voted overwhelmingly to accept the basis of union with the Congregational Christian Churches.

E.P.S. Geneva

#### HUNGARY

#### Nationalisation of Schools

On June 16, the Hungarian Parliament passed a law for the nationalisation of schools, as had already been announced in the press in a statement given by the Minister of Education and Culture on Whitsunday.

This matter had been under discussion in Hungary for over a year and on several occasions the State Churches had manifested their disagreement, notwithstanding the opposition of a strong minority in the Reformed Church and of the Free Churches.

The new law was to take effect on July 1st. From that date onwards, teachers in the confessional schools who were already paid by the State hold the same status as teachers in State schools. All buildings, equipment and funds become the property of the State. Boarding schools in which the pupils live are also nationalised. A number of church secondary schools of a special historical character will, however, remain in the hands of the Churches (Roman Catholic - 8, Calvinist-Reformed - 4, Lutheran 1). The new nationalised schools will be treated in the same way as State schools as far as religious instruction is concerned.

The Roman Catholics have strongly opposed this measure. Lutheran leaders have emphasised that such an important matter could not be solved by the deliberations of a few representatives, but that it would require the decision of the national synod. The Pastoral Organisation of the Lutheran Church unanimously declared its determination to hold to the church schools and requested the Government to remove the nationalisation of the church schools from the order of the day. The Reformed Church, although admitting that the loss of the schools will be a very serious one for the Church, has decided to turn its schools over to the State.

E.P.S. Geneva

#### 10th Anniversary of Moral Re-Armament

On July 2, 1948 Moral Re-Armament (previously called the Oxford Group) celebrated its 10th anniversary in the Hollywood-Bowl, California, when Dr Frank Buchmann, leader of the Movement, delivered an address in the course of which he stated;

"Union is the grace of rebirth. We have lost the art of uniting because we have forgotten the secret of change and rebirth. Moral Re-Armament is the good road of an ideology inspired by God upon which all can unite. Catholic, Jew and Protestant, Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist and Confucianist - all find they can travel along this good road together. It lifts them above their differences to the level of a superior ideology."

E.P.S. Geneva





GERMANYLetter from Bishop Dibelius to the Four  
Military Governors

"The struggle between the Occupying Powers has caused fresh pessimism and fresh moral dangers among the population of Berlin", emphasised Bishop Dibelius in a letter which he has addressed to the four Military Governors on the occasion of the currency reform.

"We had hoped, said Bishop Dibelius, to be freed at last by the currency reform from the uncertainty which weighs on the life of our city. We had hoped that the black market, smuggling, bureaucratisation, lack of moral standards and constant transgressions of all regulations would finally come to an end, and that economical habits, honourable dealing and intelligent work would once again be seen in our midst. Instead, the authority of the law is completely buried under contradictory instructions, and this inevitably leads to further dishonesty. In addition, measures are introduced which might easily be felt to be reprisals against the innocent. This is a contravention of the simplest rules of human behaviour."

The Bishop asks that, if a unified currency for Berlin is not possible, care should nevertheless be taken that even with different currencies the provisioning of the city should not be endangered and the population completely cut off.

E.P.S. Geneva

FRANCENational Congress of the French Federation of Christian  
Associations

The central theme of the National Congress of the French Federation of Student Christian Associations, which took place this spring at Toulouse, was freedom, studied under four of its present-day aspects: freedom with regard to oneself (Prof. Paul Ricoeur), freedom in human relationships (Pastor Henri Roser), political freedom (Pastor Roland de Pury), and God-given freedom (Pastor Wilhelm Fischer). The two hundred and thirty students who attended the course, coming from all the Universities of France and from the overseas territories, Madagascar and coloured Africa, as well as from Sweden, Great Britain, Holland, Germany, Switzerland, Italy and the Spanish refugee centre in France, showed a double tendency, according to our correspondent. "On the one hand, there was the need for a personal life relying on regular Bible study and knowledge, and on the existence of the community life; on the other, the desire that in this age of confusion, and often of resignation and negativism, we should retain a particularly open mind, conscious of the serious social, colonial and international fissions existing even where there is still an unsteady outer wall of good feeling and artificial unanimity, or even of individual good will.

"This double current, flowing partly towards piety and partly towards the secular world, is without doubt the legacy of these last years, when the French Federation has devoted itself to the understanding of the great problems of the transition period we live in, and realised the need both to pursue these studies and to trace them to their roots. May a fertile communication be brought about between these two tendencies, and bring about the broadening of both!"







Three questions came up for special examination: recent rebellions and repressions in the colonial field, the situation of the Protestants in Spain, and the great anxiety which is felt that, in the division of the world between the United States and the U.S.S.R., the Churches of Europe should be able to listen not only to the excellent arguments of Anglo-Saxon liberalism, but also to those of the collectivism of Russia and Eastern Europe.

The text of the message addressed by the Congress to the leaders of the Church before the Amsterdam Assembly is as follows:

"Faced with the ideological crisis at present dividing the world, we ask the responsible leaders of our Churches to beware of compromising the message of the Gospel regarding politics and the State with the idealism which the Western Powers are pledged to defend; we beg them to remain in readiness to offer criticisms of the social and economic interests underlying every form of political and moral idealism, so that Christians may represent genuine values in the relations which they must maintain to the uttermost with the Communists." E.P.S. Geneva

#### BELGIUM

#### Meeting of the Synod of the "Missionary Church"

The Synod of the "Eglise Missionnaire Belge" (Belgian Missionary Church) met at Quaregnon from June 20-22, 1948, and gave particular attention to its examination of the questions of evangelisation and of war and peace. The Synod addressed a message to the members of the Church, exhorting them to continue their life of prayer even more earnestly, and to have recourse to the fountain-head of all Christian life; reading the Word of God.

The Synod, the message adds, asks every Christian to consider the agonising question of war. It feels itself called by God to demand of every member and every community a careful examination of the problem of the Christian attitude to war, and it asks them to devote themselves to this study with faith and in a spirit of utter obedience to God's will.

It urges them, in this year that is so dark for the future of the world, but in which a star of hope, the Ecumenical Assembly of Amsterdam, still shines, to work for the coming of the Kingdom of God, in a spirit of glad brotherhood and complete self-dedication. E.P.S. Geneva

#### SWITZERLAND

#### Discussion on Totalitarianism

The "Kirchenblatt für die reformierte Schweiz" (Church News for Reformed Switzerland) printed in its last two issues (Nos. 12 and 13, June 10 and 24), under the heading "What are we to understand by this?", an open letter from Dr Emil Brunner, Professor of Theology in Zurich, to Professor Karl Barth in Basle, and the latter's answer, which is entitled "Theological Existence Today".

#### "What are we to understand by this?"

In connection with Professor Barth's report on Hungary (see EPS No. 18), Professor Brunner introduces his query with the statement that Barth's treatment of the problem of the Churches under the Soviet régime has "caused extreme estrangement". Barth has, he says, taken up "an attitude to the Communist Power in the







east which, if it is not exactly friendly, is nevertheless decidedly appreciative, and intentionally avoids any kind of sharp denunciation". In Barth's view the Evangelical Church should "play a waiting game with regard to the Communist East and hold itself in readiness for cooperation". This is, according to Professor Brunner, "incomprehensible to those who see no basic difference between the Communist and any other form of totalitarianism, for instance the National Socialist."

The question is now, continues Professor Brunner, whether "the whole family of totalitarianisms as such are an enmity to which the Christian Church can only say No, unconditionally, passionately and beyond any possibility of misconstruction", just as Barth for his part "said No to Hitlerism, and called upon the Church to an unconditional repudiation". Barth "has given way on the very peak of the struggle against Nazism to the problem of totalitarianism". The question as to where the Church now stands is not "whether she should take up a position of basic negation towards Communism or not, but whether she can say anything to the totalitarian State, which if it is of any consequence must be also Communist, except a passionately definite No."

Professor Brunner goes on to consider this problem by means of a series of special questions. In these points he states that the major issue is not the problem of East versus West, or of Communism versus Capitalism. So far he finds many points of agreement with Barth.

#### "Theological Existence Today"

In his answer Karl Barth explains why he is "not calling the Church today in a similar way to avowed opposition to Communism", as he did "when it was National Socialism that was concerned". In those days "it was essential", i.e. it was demanded of the Church, that a definite statement should be issued "taking up a decided position, through the Word of God, in the execution of her duty". The Church's concern is "not with isms of this kind or that, but with the historical realities which sometimes come under the light of the Word of God and of faith". It would thus be best for "the unity and continuity of theological existence, if it is not daunted by being still theological existence today". Hitler had "become a spiritual, and indeed everywhere a little of a political temptation". In that situation, Karl Barth had tried "to make the Church active". It was a question of "defence against godlessness which went effectively disguised, even for thousands of Christian eyes". Is it today equally "essential" to regard Communism in the same way? "I cannot grant that this is a repetition of the situation and the task faced between 1933 and 1945, nor that it is a Christian or an ecclesiastical duty to say once more, on theological grounds, what every citizen can in any case read every day of the week in his newspaper..."

"If the Church speaks out, then she is going in fear and trembling against the stream and not with it. Decidedly, she has today no reason to go against the stream, and thus to bear witness regarding Communism... But must she hence go completely with the stream - and so with America and with the Papacy?... Where is the spiritual danger and distress which the Church would meet with this confession of truth and justice? Whom would she be teaching, enlightening, setting straight on his path, comforting, leading to repentance and to a new life?... Since there are no satisfying answers to be given to these questions, it is my opinion that the Church, leaving aside what she did in 1933-45, should not use up







its ammunition prematurely, but should wait quietly to see whether and in what way her situation may once more become serious, and the time come for her to sit in judgment. Should a definite spiritual emergency - but we do not yet know exactly from what direction it may come! - enter into our calculations, as in 1933-45, should we ourselves once more be definitely asked, then it will be clear what, against whom and for whom we are to speak out, and how far we are equal to this new earnest situation."

E.P.S.Geneva

#### CANADA

#### Embargo on Shipment of Arms

A ban on the shipment of arms "to any nation in which a civil war is being waged, except at the request of the United Nations" was requested of the Canadian Government by the Montreal and Ottawa Conference of the United Church of Canada.

E.P.S.Geneva

#### GERMANY

#### The Ecumenical Circle

The Ecumenical Circle was recently founded in Germany. It grew out of the "Christian Fellowship in War-Time" which was founded in England in 1940 at the instigation of the Bishop of Chichester, who also became its Chairman. This was of great importance to the ecumenical movement during the war. In Germany its Vice-President is Pastor Grüber.

As its new name shows, the Ecumenical Circle (Oekumenischer Kreis) has now extended beyond German-English relations. It is under the leadership of a Committee including Pastor Menn (head of the Ecumenical Centre at Frankfurt), Dr Freudenberg of Vilbel and a number of outstanding Englishmen who are members of the Religious Department of the Control Commission. The Chairman is Dr C.G. Schweitzer, and the Secretary P.H. Kühne. Members of other countries and Churches are to be elected very shortly.

The Ecumenical Circle has set itself the task of making the ecumenical idea a reality in the German Protestant Churches. It carries on its work through local groups, some of which are particularly flourishing in the British Zone. Before and after the Assembly at Amsterdam, ecumenical teams are to visit the German Churches for the first time, thus proving the Church Universal to be a reality. Finally ecumenical conferences will be organised in the "Michaelishaus" near Hamburg on the same lines as the annual conferences held at Wistow (England) from 1943-1947. In September 1948 a larger conference is to be held on the Island of Borkum in the North Sea.

E.P.S. Geneva

#### JAPAN

#### For an International Christian University

Speaking before 75 church leaders and educators of the Federal Council of Churches and the Foreign Missions Conference in New York, Mr. Soichi Saito, chief director of the Repatriation Board in the Welfare Ministry of the Japanese Government said that Japan "is ripe" for the establishment of an international Christian University. This undertaking, he said, was supported by leading Japanese educators, religious leaders and government officials. He cautioned, however, that the institution should be "international and Christian". An option has been secured for the site outside Tokyo and 48 students have already enrolled in a seminar to train for positions on the faculty.

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